

## Message Text

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ACTION SCS-03

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 L-03 SCA-01 H-03 PA-04 PRS-01

USIA-15 /041 W

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R 151330Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5791

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CASC, MA (REPPAS, GEORGE)

SUBJ: W/W REPPAS

REFS: TANANARIVE'S (A) 965, (B) 940, AND (C) 1570

1. FYI: EMBASSY FURNISHING FOLLOWING TENTATIVE ASSESSMENT OF REPPAS TRIAL FOR WHATEVER PURPOSE DEPT MAY DEEM APPROPRIATE. WHILE NEITHER CONSULAR OFFICER NOR DCM, WHO OBSERVED PROCEEDINGS (LATTER ONLY SOME PARTS), ARE SKILLED IN FRENCH LEGAL MATTERS, CERTAIN ELEMENTS OF TRIAL NOTED BY THEM COULD PROVE OF POSSIBLE FUTURE RELEVANCE. END FYI.

2. OLIVIER RAPARISON, FIRST PROVISIONAL ADMINISTRATOR OF AGM AND CLAIMED BY DEFENSE ATTORNEYS TO BE THEIR MAIN WITNESS, DID NOT SHOW UP FOR TRIAL. REPPAS' LAWYER RAVONY CLAIMS RAPARISON LEFT FOR FRANCE SHORTLY BEFORE TRIAL AT GOMR REQUEST. EMBASSY FINDS RAPARISON ABSENCE FROM COUNTRY CURIOUS IN THAT ANOTHER WITNESS, DONALD KOPLIN (REFTEL A), WAS PREVENTED FROM DEPARTING MADAGASCAR. CIRCUMSTANCES MAY, HOWEVER, BE DIFFERENT.

3. DEFENSE QUESTIONING OF EXPERT WITNESS PIVETEAU (REFTEL B) WAS LIMITED BY JUDGE NOV 12 WHEN PROMPT, FRENCH ATTORNEY FOR "CIVIL PARTY" (REFTEL B), STATED THAT HE, HIMSELF, WAS SCHEDULED TO LEAVE SAME EVENING. AS TURNED OUT, PIVETEAU LEFT THAT EVENING AND PROMPT REMAINED TANANARIVE BECAUSE OF IMPORTANCE HE SAID HE ATTACHED TO CASE. IMPORTANCE OF DECISION TO LIMIT

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DEFENSE QUESTIONING NOT CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD BY EMBASSY. PIVETEAU,

LIKE ALL OTHER WITNESSES, HAD BEEN QUESTIONED IN EARLIER HEARINGS BY EXAMINING MAGISTRATE (JUGE D'INSTRUCTION). MAGISTRATE'S DOSSIER IS AVAILABLE TO PRESIDING JUDGE OF "COUR CORRECTIONNELLE," AND PRESIDING JUDGE MAY HAVE FELT THAT CLARIFICATIONS AND EVIDENCE IN DOSSIER WERE SUFFICIENT AND NO REPETITION NECESSARY.

4. INTERPRETING WAS OF UNPROFESSIONAL QUALITY. ALTHOUGH ERRORS WERE USUALLY CORRECTED AFTER EXTENSIVE QUESTIONING, MISTAKEN FIRST IMPRESSIONS OFTEN SEEMED TO LINGER, ADDING TO CONFUSION OF ALREADY COMPLICATED CASE.

5. "CIVIL PARTY" ASSERTED AT SEVERAL POINTS THAT EMBASSY HAD BEEN GIVEN "CODED MESSAGES FROM SAN FRANCISCO" BY AGM PRINCIPALS AND THIS EVIDENCE, THEREFORE, UNAVAILABLE TO COURT. EMBASSY KNOWS OF NO SUCH MESSAGES. DEFENDANTS ATTEMPTED TO IDENTIFY WITH USG, E.G., REPPAS' CODEFENDANT BACOPOULOS FALSELY CLAIMED THAT AGM HAD "AID POLITICAL INSURANCE". IN HIS SUMMARY, REPPAS' LAWYER RAVONY NOTED PRESENCE OF EMBASSY REPS AS INDICATION REPPAS' "GOOD CHARACTER".

6. EMBASSY'S GENERAL IMPRESSION IS THAT TRIAL WAS CONDUCTED IN BUSINESSLIKE MANNER WITH NO PRONOUNCED PREJUDICE ON PART OF PRESIDING JUDGE.

7. AS REPORTED REFTTEL C, VERDICT DUE NOV 23.  
MENDENHALL

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## Message Attributes

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